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UTAH BULLETIN UT250-08-01

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT-ISSUED TRAVEL CHARGE CARDS

Purpose: To remind all employees of the consequences of misusing travel charge cards.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2008

The government-issued travel charge cards are issued to NRCS Utah employees for use in connection with official travel. The USDA Travel Card Regulations 2300-001, explains the Department's Zero-Tolerance Policy regarding travel charge card misuse. This bulletin establishes NRCS Utah guidance for addressing the misuse of travel charge cards issued to NRCS Utah employees.

Use of the card is **mandatory**, as is compliance with the Department's Government Travel Card Regulation. Employees who misuse their travel charge cards may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal from federal service.

Each cardholder received the terms and conditions for use of the card when it was issued, as well as periodic reminders of cardholder responsibilities.

Misusing the travel charge card has serious consequences. Recently National Bulletin NB.360.7.32, PER – Travel Charge Card Misuse dated August 23, 2007, and National Instruction 360.300 Part 300 - Misuse of the Travel Charge Card dated August 2007, were issued to remind employees of the ramifications associated with misusing the travel charge card.

Examples of potential circumstances and penalties for misuse of government travel charge cards include:

- Removal for enabling another person to use your travel charge card.
- Suspension or removal for making unauthorized purchases (including cash advances).
- Suspension or removal for delinquency in paying travel charge card bills.

[National Instruction 360-300](#) issued August 2007, contains specific information about the disciplinary penalties warranted by various types of travel charge card misuse. The following table incorporates Utah's guidance on penalties associated with misuse of the card.

Please note this table provides a suggested range of penalties that a deciding official can use when considering discipline to employees who misuse the travel charge card. The table is not all-inclusive. The absence of a particular type of misuse does not preclude appropriate disciplinary action. The use of a particular penalty is not mandatory simply because it is listed in the table. In addition, deviations from the table are allowable for a variety of reasons. For example, employees who make payments 1-30 days late will receive a notification of delinquency and those who repeatedly receive these letters

could be subject to disciplinary action. Also, when an employee has repeatedly committed the same offense, even though the employee is being charged with the offense for the first time, it may be appropriate to exceed the maximum suggested penalty. Conversely, there may be occasions when it may be appropriate to assess a penalty below the minimum suggested for the offense.

PENALTY GUIDE

NATURE OF MISCONDUCT	FIRST OFFENSE	SECOND OFFENSE	THIRD OFFENSE
Delinquency Payment is 31-60 days past due: Infrequent traveler (≤ 5 trips/year) Frequent traveler (>5 trips/year)	Letter of Warning and/or Deactivation of Credit Card* Letter of Warning to Reprimand	Reprimand to 7-day suspension Reprimand to 14-day suspension	14 to 30-day suspension 30-day suspension to removal
Misuse Personal purchases, or cash advances, not related to official travel : One transaction/cash advance ≤ \$300 One transaction/cash advance > \$300 More than one transaction/cash advance. Note: A transaction is a single use of the card regardless of number of items purchased at one time.	Deactivation of Credit Card* & Reprimand to 14-day suspension Deactivation of Credit Card* & 15- to 30-day suspension Deactivation of Credit Card* & 60-day suspension to Removal	30-day suspension to Removal 60-day suspension to Removal Removal	Removal Removal

Excessive purchases, or excessive cash advances (as defined by D.R. 2300-001) associated with official travel			
Advance(s) associated with one trip.	Deactivation of Credit Card* & Reprimand to 30-day suspension	60-day suspension to Removal	Removal
Advances associated with more than one trip.	Deactivation of Credit Card* & 60-day suspension to Removal	Removal	
Allowing/enabling another to use the cardholder's card.	Removal		

* Deactivated credit cards will only be activated during times of official travel duty. If a card is deactivated, the user will have to contact the state financial management staff and request activation prior to every temporary duty. All deactivated accounts will be reviewed annually for consideration of renewal or activation.

The financial management staff will conduct monthly reviews and audits of all government credit card accounts.

Again, the misuse of the travel charge card has serious consequences; therefore, it is recommended that each cardholder review Departmental Regulation 2300-001 (available at: <http://www.ocio.usda.gov/directives/doc/DR2300-001.pdf>) and discuss any questions with supervisors. To further understand regulations on use of the government travel charge card, employees may also request one of the following web-based training sessions through AgLearn. (1) USDA-GSA-Travel Card or (2) Ethics: Use of Government Travel Cards.

References:

National Bulletin 360.7.32

National Instruction 360.300 Part 300

DR2300-001

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/S/

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